

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 13, 2023

The Honorable Alexander Hoehn-Saric
Chairman
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
4330 East-West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814

Chairman Hoehn-Saric:

We write to you regarding our serious concerns over the recent reports that the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) may ban natural gas stoves.¹ Many Americans rely on natural gas stoves as a safe, reliable, and affordable tool in their kitchen. Any action by the CPSC to ban or restrict the availability of natural gas stoves, or any home appliances dependent upon natural gas, would be an incredible overreach by the federal government in an attempt to establish even more control over Americans and their way of life. We believe this is unreasonable. This is the latest in a slew of unilateral actions taken by this administration in establishing a restrictive “nanny state” in the United States.

The Energy Information Agency (EIA) estimates that 35 percent of homes in the United States – more than 40 million Americans – use a natural gas stove.² For many Americans, especially those in hurricane zones or with an unreliable electrical grid, natural gas stoves are a critical lifeline. Unlike electric alternatives, during an electricity outage, a natural gas stove can still be used to cook food and heat water. Banning natural gas stoves, a critical tool for many Americans in their everyday lives, would leave them unable to provide for their families - especially in an emergency.

Alternatives to natural gas stoves, such as electrical or induction stoves, face safety and economic challenges. In a study of home cooking fires, the National Fire Protection Association found that “although 60 percent of households cook with electricity, four out of five (80 percent) ranges or cooktops involved in reported cooking fires were powered by electricity.”³ The report

¹ Ari Natter, *US Safety Agency to Consider Ban on Gas Stoves Amid Health Fears*, Bloomberg (January 9, 2023), Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-09/us-safety-agency-to-consider-ban-on-gas-stoves-amid-health-fears?srnd=green&sref=Vi7wu7Hv&leadSource=uverify%20wall>

² U.S. Energy Information Administration, Consumption and Efficiency Data, <https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/data/2015/hc/php/hc3.6.php>

³ Marty Ahrens, National Fire Protection Association, “Home Cooking Fires” (July 2020). Available at: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/US-Fire-Problem/Fire-causes/oscooking.pdf>

also indicated that “the civilian fire injury rate per million households was 4.8 times higher with electric ranges than in households using gas ranges.”⁴ Induction ranges – which have been suggested as an alternative to natural gas stoves – remain much more expensive and require induction-enabled cookware to create heat.⁵ If the CPSC would move forward to ban natural gas stoves, or other home goods reliant upon such fuel, it would increase the dangers facing families who depend on natural gas and can’t afford to replace their home appliances.

Voluntary standards, such as those created by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and CSA Group, play an important role in preserving the safety of American consumers. The CPSC’s most recent Voluntary Standards Tracking Activity Report outlines work performed by the CPSC staff to strengthen safety provisions by updating the ANSI Z21.1-2016/CSA 1.1-2016 standard. The report states that while staff will “continue to chair and participate in TSC meetings” and “work with the data task group to review CPSC gas range incident data,” the voluntary standard was not updated. The withdrawal of Canadian staff and challenges developing a robust coding method, not a lack of engagement by appliance manufacturers and natural gas producers, are cited as reasons the voluntary standard was not updated.⁶ The Consumer Product Safety Act (CPSA) requires that standards are “reasonably necessary to prevent or reduce an unreasonable risk of injury associated with the consumer product.”⁷ Moving to a mandatory standard, especially without first completing the voluntary standards process, would be a clear overstep by the CPSC.

In an interview cited by Bloomberg, Commissioner Trumka stated that natural gas stoves are “...a hidden hazard. Any option is on the table. Products that can’t be made safe can be banned.”⁸ In a January 10th tweet attempting to clarify his statement, Commissioner Trumka stated that regulations would only apply to new products.⁹ Given the Commissioner’s previous statements, this seems unlikely to be the case. If a product is dangerous enough to be banned for future use, how can it be safe to leave existing natural gas stoves in use? The slippery slope beginning with a ban on future natural gas stoves likely ends in a product recall for existing appliances.

When Congress sets specific statutory limitations on the presence of substances such as lead and phthalates, the CPSC is enabled to move quickly and effectively to limit the use in consumer products. Natural gas is a clean, reliable, safe, and affordable fuel and feedstock. Unfortunately, activists at all levels of government are trying to ban it. In states like Washington, the Washington State Building Code Council recently banned the use of gas-powered furnaces

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Paul Hope, *Pros and Cons of Induction Cooktops and Ranges*, Consumer Reports (December 18, 2022), Available at: <https://www.consumerreports.org/electric-induction-ranges/pros-and-cons-of-induction-cooktops-and-ranges-a5854942923/>

⁶ Consumer Product Safety Commission, Voluntary Standards Tracking Activity Report, FY 2021 Annual Report, December 15, 2021. Available at: <https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/Voluntary-Standards-Activities-Fiscal-Year-2021-Annual-Report.pdf>

⁷ 15 U.S.C. § 2058

⁸ Ari Natter, *US Safety Agency to Consider Ban on Gas Stoves Amid Health Fears*, Bloomberg (January 9, 2023), Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-09/us-safety-agency-to-consider-ban-on-gas-stoves-amid-health-fears?srnd=green&sref=Vi7wu7Hv&leadSource=uverify%20wall>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/TrumkaCPSC/status/1612553459462721536>

for homes.¹⁰ Without the draw of gas-powered heating, for many Americans it will be too expensive to run natural gas lines to their homes. This proposal to ban natural gas stoves is nothing more than a backdoor attempt to federalize the radical agenda to ban natural gas. Despite the best efforts of the radical left, the Congressional Record is clear – the CPSC does not have the authority to limit the use of natural gas, and your Commission should not do anything to undermine American’s confidence in the safety and quality of natural gas stoves.

Reports that the CPSC is moving to ban natural gas stoves is of deep concern. Accordingly, we ask that you respond to the following questions in writing by January 30, 2022:

1. Please provide details on the CPSC’s work:
 - a. Are CPSC staff are working to scope voluntary standards on natural gas stoves?
 - b. What technical work and data analysis is necessary before staff can make conclusions regarding the relationship between emissions from natural gas stoves and indoor air concentrations?
 - c. Has the CPSC determined that voluntary standards are no longer appropriate for natural gas stoves?
 - d. Has the CPSC collected sufficient information to develop the scientific and economic findings necessary to support a mandatory standard, or even to recommend a specific course of action in a voluntary standard?
 - e. Are collaborations with industry stakeholders to develop ANSI Z21.1-2016/CSA 1.1-2016 standard ongoing?
2. In response to a September 23, 2022, oversight letter, you provided a list of all expected rulemakings and the specific Congressional authority for each rulemaking.¹¹ This list did not include a natural gas stove ban. Given Commissioner Trumka’s statements, explain why a prospective rulemaking concerning natural gas stoves was not included.
3. Please provide all research and analysis conducted and reviewed by the CPSC in advance of the reported rulemaking to ban natural gas stoves.

¹⁰ Brett Davis, *Washington Building Coe Council mandates heat pumps in all new homes*, The Center Square (November 7, 2022), Available at: https://www.thecentersquare.com/washington/washington-building-code-council-mandates-heat-pumps-in-all-new-homes/article_da78a11a-5ef8-11ed-9293-2386c56f6fbf.html

¹¹Chair Alexander Hoehn-Saric November 18, 2022 Letter. Available at: https://d1dth6e84htgma.cloudfront.net/2022_11_18_CPSC_Correspondence_Response_to_EC_CMMR_Letter_FIN_AL_51a15becfc.pdf?updated_at=2023-01-11T22:43:15.358Z

- a. Has the CPSC explored any conflicts of interest, or potential for financial gain, if a ban of natural gas stoves were to go into effect, associated with any of the backers of the recent report that is being used to justify this proposed ban?¹²
 - b. What is the available supply chain and respective countries of origin to feed such a forced conversion to electric stoves, as well as the other electric panel upgrades to meet the load demands?
 - c. Will the CPSC undertake an economic review of the American people's ability to purchase a new stove amid record level inflation?
 - d. Will the CPSC be conducting an economic impact assessment prior to any action that would ban natural gas stoves?
4. Please describe all coordination with other federal agencies, including but not limited to the Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, regarding the reported natural gas stove ban.
5. As a member agency, please describe the input the Federal Interagency Committee on Indoor Air Quality has had on the proposed natural gas stove ban.
6. To help educate the public on potential indoor air quality hazards, the CPSC helps publish "The Inside Story: A Guide to indoor Air Quality, of which the" opening line reads "All of us face a variety of risks to our health as we go about our day-to-day lives. Driving in cars, flying in planes, engaging in recreational activities, and being exposed to environmental pollutants all pose varying degrees of risk."¹³
 - a. Based on current scientific evidence, what specific health risks do you believe would meet the "reasonably necessary to prevent or reduce an unreasonable risk of injury associated with the consumer product" standard outlined in sections 7 and 9 of the CPSA?
 - b. Based on current scientific evidence, are you confident a natural gas stove ban would be upheld in court?
 - c. If you answered yes to the previous question, what resources will the CPSC need to redirect to make such a claim in court?
7. If natural gas stoves are deemed unsafe by the CPSC, would a recall of the product be necessary? Why or why not?

¹² Gruenwald, T.; Seals, B.A.; Knibbs, L.D.; Hosgood, H.D., III. Population Attributable Fraction of Gas Stoves and Childhood Asthma in the United States. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2023, 20, 75.

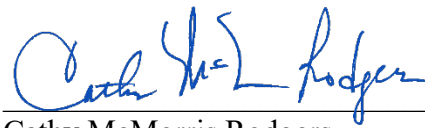
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010075>

¹³ Consumer Product Safety Commission, The Inside Story: A Guide to Indoor Air Quality. Available at: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home/The-Inside-Story-A-Guide-to-Indoor-Air-Quality>

8. Describe and provide any direction or orders from President Biden, or his administration, to focus on, and consider recalling or banning consumer products that utilize natural gas.
9. Explain how climate change mitigation influence the CPSC's proposed natural gas stove ban.

We look forward to your prompt response to this request. Please contact Michael Cameron and Brandon Mooney of Committee staff to schedule a briefing and to answer questions concerning this matter at (202) 225-2927.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce